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PROGRESS OF THOUGHT IN THE CHURCH.

It may seem strange to say that, if the American people are ever driven away from the Church, and from faith in the Christian religion, it will be the fault of the Church and of the Pulpit. Believing is more natural to our people than unbelieving. The parental instinct seeks a conserving religion for the children's sake. Whatever the father may desire of influence, of wealth, or position, there is always that mother, who judges all things by their relation to the welfare of her children. To her the child is the pivot on which the world turns. The supreme question with her is, What effect will new movements or doctrines have on my children? There is an ineradicable belief that Christian morality is the safe road for childhood to manhood, and that the qualities enjoined by Jesus are indispensable to success in this life, even if there shall be no other life. The household, therefore, is a bulwark against infidelity. The household is a church. The strong and ineradicable love of mothers for their offspring is priest, prophet, and preacher.

In nations where the Christian Church has been made partner with the State in great oppressions, there may be a wasting revolution, and, as in France, the popular instinct may be away from faith, and the grossest paganism may for a time prevail; but not in America. The Church here has always been of the

VOL. CXXXV.—NO. 309.

8

people and for the people. Its ministers have been leaders in education, in public spirit, in patriotism. There may be dogmas and doctrines to be ousted, but no wrongs to be avenged. From the colonial days men know that the churches of America have been the organized centers of benevolence, and from them have issued the faith which sustained the Colonies in dark days, the enthusiasm which has overthrown national dangers. There has never been an organized infidelity—unbelief has no gospel. Eminent and good men have been infidel to church creeds, seldom to religion. The scoffing infidelity which believes nothing, and seeks to eradicate faith, root and branch, is uncongenial to the temper and good sense of Americans of native birth, and of American education. From nature, from training, and from domestic common sense, as well as from a higher inspiration, our people are inclined to religion. They may tolerate change in its institutions, they may amuse themselves with the wit of good-natured infidels, they may applaud intelligent doubt which refuses the weeds which have been bound up in the sheaves of theology, and that unbelief which simply refuses to take a part for the whole; but, the rational reverence, the aspiring ideality, which work away from the gross and the low, will forbid the American mind to join in wasting skepticism. It will demand something better for everything it gives up.

That a great change, progressive and prophetic, is passing over the public mind, in matters of religious truth, there can be no doubt. It is worth our while to study the nature and direction of it, and the causes which are pushing it forward.

We are passing out of an age in which churches are revered as divine by an ordinance of God. Men are coming to believe the function of churches to be eminent and divine, but not their structure and origin. Churches have grown from the necessities of human nature seeking moral elevation, as schools grow up from the necessities of intellectual development; as eleemosynary institutions grow from the requirements of humanity; as civil governments grow out of the necessities of society. God created human nature, and, in a sense, all that is necessary to it. He created iron, but not machinery; forests, but not furniture; textile substances, but not garments; colors, but not pictures; a religious nature in man, but not schools for religion. The progress of such views will ultimately give strength to religious organizations; will take them away from superstition and credulity, and

plant them upon grounds of reason. Their usefulness will be their preservation. But a change in the philosophy of organizations does not destroy or even enfeeble Christian institutions. The activity of Christian churches shows no decadence; churches are found springing up in every nook and corner. They march with the army of emigration. They spring up in territories and new states at once. Not the cabin, the court-house, or the school, are more sure to appear on the pioneer line than churches. They follow the plow, and spring up as seed from its furrows. Nor are the benign activities of Christian churches slacking; everywhere they are fountains of benevolence. They are in every village the organized centers of influence for morality, for education, and for public spirit. The activity and whole benefit of the churches are not to be found inside the churches any more than the benefit of the sun is within the sun. The light-house is not for its own illumination, but for those far and near upon a troubled sea. Churches shed their light through all the moralities of society.

Churches in America of all sects universally inspire intelligence, and lead in founding and nourishing schools for popular education, and institutions for higher culture. They follow the march of population, and, almost faster than emigrants build their houses, the organized Christianity of the land lays foundations of sound learning. Six millions of Africans have just passed through the Red Sea of war to the promised land of liberty. Already schools, colleges, and theological seminaries spring up among them, planted and watered by Christian beneficence. It would be wrong to say that beneficence is confined to Christian churches. But it is not to be denied that the Christian churches of America lead the way in every movement for the education of the common people, for the redemption of men from ignorance and superstition. The impulse of sympathy is not occasional, fitful, irregular; it is organized, steadfast, always abounding.

Certainly, in no other period or nation has religion been such an inspiration to whatever is humane, liberal, and generous; to whatever is pure, true, and just; to whatever is genial, sympathetic, and chivalrous in public spirit; to whatever is brave, heroic and refulgent in just war, or indulgent and fruitful in honorable peace.

The religious sentiment was never so intelligent, or so strong, in America as now. If it seems less intense, it is because it is less

narrow. It now embraces a world of influences unknown or unfelt in the Puritan period. Aspiration, reverence for God, sympathy with his works, the refinement of strength, sympathy with all that is generous, magnanimous, or just, were never so widely diffused. Men no longer are shut up in a church and a family. These are but sacred altars whose light and fire shine though an almost illimitable sphere. Riches have taken the place of poverty; with riches have come art, knowledge, variety in social life, innocent pleasures interlacing life's daily burdens; civil liberty has brought duties and occupation to all. The religious spirit diffuses itself as an atmosphere over all this firmament which declares God's glory, and the earth which is increasingly full, to men's apprehension, of his handiwork. This diffusion of the religious spirit is more in consonance with the divine nature, and with the best nature of the world—with historic religion itself, than that circumscribed element which is to be supplanted.

A marked change has come over the spirit of worship. In mediæval and monarchic days, worship was veneration pivoted on fear. God was not yet a father, worship was not yet a love. To abase oneself, to fall prostrate before the unknown, to dwell upon one's inferiority, and to mortify one's natural and innocent impulses, was thought acceptable to God. Veneration is not less than formerly, but its language and attitude are changed. Its voice is no longer the voice of fear. It has learned the manners and expression of liberty and of love. It has blossomed, and is more fragrant and beautiful than when in its early state it had but rude leaves. Those who have seen veneration only under black robes, in superstitious bondage to forms, and speaking the language of the ascetic, do not recognize it as it moves with freer step, a voice of music, and in garments of light.

Christianity as a law of sympathy was never so strong as in this age. The brotherhood of the human family is recognized as never before. The literature of our age, at home and abroad, is humane to a degree never known before. Amid much that is pure and noble in French literature there is a rank and foul growth of sensuous and brutal paganism. The taint has infected more recent English writings. It is the peculiar glory of American literature that as yet it has contained no immoral or corrupting poets, novelists, or essayists. The German language carries with it knowledge and speculation. The French language conveys science and art with elegant literature. The English

language and literature, above all others, carries knowledge, liberty, and religion. As that language is taking precedence of all others and settling itself all over the world, it diffuses that inspiration which ennobles manhood, which teaches men to build free States, which tempers justice with humanity, which raises the humblest citizen to a participation in all civic affairs, and opens to every one alike every path to influence, to fame, to wealth, and to intelligent happiness.

A better spirit prevails among sects. The lines of division are but lines, and not walls. There is no sign of outward mechanical unity, but there is an increasing sympathy between churches of differing creeds and ordinances. Christians of all denominations come together in matters of patriotism, of education, and of the reform of morals. Clergymen can now pass from one denomination to another without insincerity. One may in succession join or preach in the Methodist, the Baptist, the Presbyterian, the Congregationalist churches, with no more imputation of having changed faith, or been insincere, than would a citizen be charged with civic indifference or insincerity, who in succession should reside in Connecticut, New York, Ohio, and Oregon.

Churches are permitting greater liberty of theological thought in the ministry than ever before; not because of laxity or indifference, but because there is a growing conviction that great-heartedness is more akin to the Gospel spirit than dogma or doctrine. If men can do good work in art, mechanics, husbandry, or any other secular calling, they are judged by the work which they perform, and not by the tools which they use. At length common sense is permitting clergymen to employ their own tools, provided the workmanship is good. Even that magnificent sect that boasts that, like the eternal arctic zone, it never changes, has come under ameliorating influences. It may seem to some the iceberg of ages; but its voyage is toward the Gulf Stream — the sun smites it above, and the warm waters gnaw it beneath. It will soon join itself to that ocean which, with shore of many shapes, with bay or promontory, with many names and many climes and many temperatures, is the one great body that sheets the globe, and by its very greatness rubs out all ragged lines, and holds its own in world-wide unity.

The Roman Catholic Church in America is brought under an invisible influence that will change or limit it more than all argu-

ments or opposition. As a human institution it has as much right to live as any Protestant Church. Its ceremonies, its liturgies, its governments, its claims and theories, are for those who like them, but are imperative on none but those who choose them. Unlike the laws of the land, they are not obligatory. But in several respects the spirit of the age is inimical to the Roman Church. Its priesthood is an aristocracy of the most intense character in a nation and an age peculiarly penetrated with the democratic spirit. It teaches with authority, and demands the submission of reason to its declarations. But, in our age and nation, Reason acts upon reasons, and not upon authority. It has therefore to contend against the invisible spirit of the age, which, in the long run, wears out all opposition. In another respect, its strength is its weakness. The one paramount doctrine of the New Testament is the independence and self-control of the *individual*. The spirit of Jesus and the impassioned pleadings of Paul were for the independence of the individual. Not that society should not integrate and organize, but that the final outcome of government and society should be derived from the magnitude, the arithmetical value of the integers. It is in this direction—the sanctity of man as a child of God—that the great Apostle is most earnest and eloquent. Every man shall give account of HIMSELF to God; neither church nor priest can answer for him. Therefore, clear his path. Lay no hand upon him; God is his master and judge. Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? To his own master, not to thy creed, government, or command, he shall stand or fall.

The essential difference between Protestant philosophy and Roman Catholic philosophy may be expressed in a sentence. The Catholic Church demands and forms a *corporate conscience*, the Protestant seeks to develop an *individual conscience*. The one employs authority, the other influence. Both instruct: the one through a submissive faith, the other through reason.

Here again the spirit of the age is against the hierarchy. The democratic disposition of our people, the tendencies of their laws and government, the genius of their schools, all work toward the liberty of individual reason and the liberty of the individual conscience. Nature and government are exhaling an invisible influence, which, as clouds and rains and frosts in long ages rasp down very mountains, will at length bring limitation, change, and reformation to the Catholic Church.

It is no wish of ours that it should perish. It is the grandest organization of time. Its history is almost the history of the race for two thousand years. Its aim is sublime and its achievements wonderful. Its faults have been great, but what great government can cast the first stone? Shall monarchy be destroyed because kings have sinned? Shall republics be disfranchised because Marat, Robespierre, and Danton have blackened the memory of the French Republic? It has healed as well as hurt. The holy men and women in her calendar fill the heaven of history with stars. Her missionary and priestly martyrs have given to human nature its crowning glories. Her literature is an imperishable treasure. Her hymns have convoyed myriads through sorrows and darkness to light, love, and victory, and are still chanting in the air, in every tongue, to all within her communion, or out of it, as with angel voices, words of divine love, of Christian hope, of triumph over death, of immortality in heaven. I am her son, her brother, her lover; but, as son, lover, brother, I desire for this great sect such inspiration and purification as shall bring her into accord with the inward purposes of Christianity, and reconcile her to the aim and drift of divine providence in this age and nation. Then, with fervor of joy, I can say: "Peace be within thy walls, and prosperity within thy palaces; for my brethren and companions' sake, I will now say, Peace be within thee; because of the house of the Lord our God, I will seek thy good."

In every vital age, when human intelligence is quickened, there will be certain commanding influences developed, which, from their universality, their invisibility, and their unconscious influence, might be called climatic and cosmical.

First. It is supposed that the world is indebted to original thinkers, to trained investigators, to rigid experimenters, and that the common people are merely the recipients of the benefits which they did nothing to create. But this power of scholars or scientists to develop truth depends very largely upon the intelligence and sympathy of the common people. They give force, extension, and enthusiasm to the results of learned labor. They are the nurses who care for the children of the brain. They give sustenance to those who explore. They form an atmosphere, a public sentiment, around investigators. They give power and practical use to the dry products of the inquiring brain. The

reaction of popular intelligence is, in many ways, as needful to science and learning as is the special training of scholars and scientists. Both are needful for the production of a cycle of knowledge. What is the voice of one man to the response of millions as an enforcement of truth? One man kindles the torch, but a million reflectors catch the light and diffuse it. The very twilight of the pulpit may become noonday among the pews. When Israel stood between Mounts Ebal and Gerizim to hear the law, at each sentence the people shouted "Amen." What was the solitary voice of the single speaker to the thunder of that great Amen which shook the mountain and the earth? The moral consciousness of people is the Amen to the pulpit. As Sunday-schools bring thousands of young men and maidens to the humble office of teachers, they are taught to study the sacred scriptures; they are provided with helpers; they are made partners of the clergymen. They finally form the jury before which he pleads, and the autocracy of the pulpit ceases. In this way scholastic learning is gradually laid aside, mere formal logic is ranked low, and the spirit of the people, for their own sake and for the sake of their children, demands a practical knowledge that can be converted to the uses of life.

It is in this way that the pulpit is changing its methods and material of sermons. No matter what becomes of Decrees of Election and of Reprobation, an audience of fathers and mothers understand what Fatherhood is. No ingenuity or eloquence can persuade them that a God, who for ten thousand years has labored to produce an infinite population of damnable souls, can with decency be called our Father. The common sense, the humanity, the moral sense which have grown out of the Gospel are judging theology. Little by little the pulpit shrinks from mediæval theology. Ministers first gloss it by new interpretations, then they prudently hold it in suspense, then doubt it, then cast it away.

Second. There is a strong and growing tendency to enlarge the sphere of Divine Revelation by adding to the Bible the revelation of Nature, and of man's reason and moral consciousness, which are a chief part of Nature. Theology has mainly regarded the revelation in scriptural record as sole and exclusive. It has looked with great suspicion upon reason, while employing its might to forge arguments against its plenary use. It has more than doubted Nature—it has degraded it, and made

it a by-word. The school of the ascetic has corrupted men's minds, and made discord between the Bible and Nature. To lean to one's reason has been declared a sin and snare. What, then, shall we lean upon? If a man may not use his eyes, what may he see with? It is taught that man must take God's word implicitly, without controversy. But how shall he understand the word without the use of his reason? Is there no other word of God than the Bible? Have the heavens ceased to declare the glory of God, and the earth to show his handiwork? Does God no longer speak through man's moral consciousness? Is man forbidden to use his own reason while commanded to believe the reasoning of the Church? Did God sit down and write the Bible? or did he whisper all its statements in the ear of inspired men, who became mechanical reporters? Has God been doing nothing for two thousand years, since the completion of Scripture, which it is worth man's while to know? That God speaks through the Scriptures is not denied, since they are themselves the record of human experience under divine guidance and inspiration. When by their use men have grown to larger reason, higher morality, deeper spirituality, to a wisdom of life unknown to antiquity, is the revelation of God through this advanced and purified nature of man unworthy to be concurrent with the old, and to give to it a clearer and more rational interpretation?

In an important sense the Sacred Scriptures are of God. They contain precious truth. By their moral unity, and by their accord with human reason and intelligent moral consciousness, they justly hold authority over men's conduct and character. But they claim no such mechanical perfection as has been claimed for them. They have authority only concurrently with educated human reason and rational moral sense. On any other supposition, the church becomes a temple, the Bible an idol, and priests and theologians the despotic interpreters of its meaning. There can be no question that a strong influence is setting in to redeem the Bible from the hands of a narrow school of theology, to open it that the sweet wind of perpetual divine revelation may blow through it, and to bring it into unity with Nature, and to set before men the threefold divine revelation of history recorded in the Book, in universal human reason, and in the laws and structure of the world itself.

The alternative which every year will press more and more

vehemently upon educated and thinking men, is the enfranchisement of the Bible or — infidelity !

Third. A third great movement in our time is a transition from the creeds of the past to the formation of creeds adapted to the present wants and present knowledge of truth.

Much of what is called infidelity is a revolt from the errors of old theology. The Church, the Bible, the Creed, have been confounded with Religion. Religion is the state of a man's soul, it is disposition and conduct. Neither church, book, nor theology is of value except as an educating instrument. They have no sacredness of their own. They are mere servants. Man alone, as a son of God and an heir of immortality, has an inherent sanctity. But the popular impression has been assiduously cultivated that a man falls into infidelity who no longer accepts the reigning creeds, no matter how just, how pure, how beneficent his life may be. Heresy is dissent from a reigning creed. Courts and councils have again and again decided that heresy is substantial ostracism. Men may be proud, self-seekers, worldly, self-indulgent—thus denying, in practical forms, every principle of Christian life, and yet be orthodox and of relative good standing ; but a saintly life, dissenting from a barbaric creed, is not worthy of sympathy or a membership in the church.

Our age is not in rebellion against clear, intellectual statements of religious truth. But there is a rebellion against the tyranny of mediæval creeds. It is not extravagant to say that a revolution is at hand in regard to the whole philosophy of Christianity, and that this revolution is led on, not from restless impatience of restraint, nor by novelty, nor by a worldly spirit, but by the deepest moral consciousness of men who love truth above all price, and who value a Christian manhood above all measure.

The signs are in the air. Men no longer preach doctrines to which they swore in their ordination vows—or they give to them new meanings, at variance with historic fact. It is beginning to be permitted men to preach their own view of truth unclipped by creeds. Sagacious and cautious men are quietly sowing seed which they know will by and by destroy old notions. Other men testify to change, by greater zeal in teaching the old symbols of doctrine. Every age has a race of men who elect themselves to the care of other men's beliefs, who appoint themselves God's sheriffs to hunt and run down heretics. They are very

busy. Men are ceasing to employ creeds as lines of separation between sect and sect, and are shaking hands in a higher fellowship over and across them. Creeds have ceased to be employed as conservatories of piety. Orthodoxy confesses that truth can no longer be kept in church or seminary by creeds, but only by living faith.

Andover, next to Princeton the very Jerusalem of Jerusalems of orthodoxy, triply guarded by a creed made tight and strong beyond all breaking or picking, and to which the whole body of its professors were sworn to reswear every five years, has, alas! with some levity and merriment, shown to the world with what agility good men could fly over it, walk around it. They interpret the creed of fifty years ago, not by what its makers meant, but by what the professors think they ought to have meant, and would have meant if they had received a full Andover course!

Fourth. The development of physical science constitutes the grand feature of the last half-century. The doctrine of the *Conservation of Forces*, and the discovery of the method of creation, viz., *Evolution*, while revolutionizing physical science, will powerfully reform social and moral theories. At length the flood of ignorance has abated, and the dove of truth has solid ground on which to put its foot. The study of the human mind from the side of physics as well as metaphysics is productive of changes of the most radical and important kind. Religion has much to hope, and the old theology much to fear from scientific disclosures.

It matters little that upon some points the great doctrine of evolution is yet in discussion. The debate is not about the reality of evolution, but, of the influences which produce or direct it. That the stellar world was not created instantly by the Divine will, but gradually through uncountable ages; that this inorganic globe was the product of slowly unfolding changes; that the vegetable kingdom did not come into being at once, but by slow evolution from simple to complex; that the animal kingdom developed from original simple forms, and attained its present condition through ages of gradual unfolding from lower to higher; that the human race has been subject to the same great law and method of creation—may be said to be undisputed among scientific men, whether Christian or not Christian. This is not all. The presumption gains ground that the chain of succession is unbroken, and that, as civilized man unfolded from the

barbaric and savage man, so the human race itself is developed from the animal kingdom.

At this point there is a halt. It is perhaps the most revolutionary tenet ever advanced. It will be to theology what Newton's discoveries were to the old astronomy. The repugnance that men feel at descending along such a road, and with such an ancestry, would foam and subside in a short time. It is not the retrospect, but the prospect, which gives such almost universal hesitation to the mind and imagination of mere scientific moralists. Its admission would be fatal to the theory of a plenary and verbal inspiration of the Bible, still held by some. The first two chapters of Genesis have been a sword in the hands of theologues of old with which to fight the discoveries of modern astronomy. Next, they were sharpened against the advent of geology. In both conflicts God prevailed, and the truth was victorious. Now, again, but upon a more tremendous issue, theology resists evolution. It is an honest resistance. To admit the truth of evolution is to yield up the reigning theology. It is to change the whole notion of man's origin, his nature, the problem of human life, the philosophy of morality, the theory of sin, the structure of moral government as taught in the dominant theologies of the Christian world; the fall of man in Adam, the doctrine of original sin, the nature of sin and the method of atoning for it. The decrees of God, as set forth in the Confession of Faith, and the machinery supposed to be set at work for man's redemption, the very nature and disposition of God—as taught in the falsely called Pauline, but really Augustinian theology, popularly known as Calvinistic—must give way.

That good men should dread the breaking up of systematic theology is not surprising. The scheme is elaborate. It represents the learning and thought, and, for that matter, the emotions of the best men of the ages. Theology is a modern encyclopaedia. It seeks to arrange whatever is highest in divine nature, and whatever is deepest and purest in the human experience. Theology has been deemed the princely science, the noblest study. It has been a battle-ground. Men's lives depended on their theology. On a right definition was life or death. He who did not rightly believe in the miracle of transubstantiation had no further use for his faculties. Thus, the Protestant and the Catholic, the Arminian and the Calvinist, the Arian and the Orthodox, have built their theology as nations build forts. The

history of religious doctrines is one of the most wonderful recitations, of good sense, of *un*-sense, and nonsense. The Greek mind speculated, with its accustomed ingenuity, upon the persons of the divine nature; the Roman mind organized the elements of law, justice, and conscience, and gradually, as the church became a great worldly power, opened up eschatology, or the issues of the eternities. The excessive ingenuity of the schoolmen of the middle ages spun finer and finer the gossamer threads of ethics, and wove fabrics as marvelous as ever came from Chinese looms.

Before the science of mind had an existence, men treated the remote and inconceivable elements of the divine mind with perfect assurance. They knew God's thoughts and purposes as if in confidential relations with him. The debate respecting the persons of the Trinity made the air lurid for hundreds of years. Because the Bible called God King, the kingly government of ancient and of mediæval days furnished the elements from which theology formed the theory of God's moral government. A few texts of Scripture were enough, whether poetry, narrative, or pictorial drama, to establish a doctrine. From the marvels of the childhood of the race, from the severity of the imperious Samuel, from the tender hymns of David, from the sublime rage of the prophets, from the dreams and visions of Ezekiel, from the clouds, the trumpets, the horsemen of the Apocalypse, its auroral heavens, its lurid dramas, its thunders and mysterious voices, the honest weavers of theology drew their threads and wove their theories, and stamped them with the Bible brand, and called men infidels who should set their feeble reason against God's Word! Thus it has come to pass that theology may find itself described, after its own manner, in the vision of Daniel: "This image's head was of fine gold, his breast and his arms of silver, his belly and his thighs of brass, his legs of iron, his feet part of iron and part of clay."

In modern hands great change has come over theology, as the result of increasing knowledge. There is a uniform tendency, away from the aristocratic and monarchic toward the democratic; an effusion of tenderness toward man, and especially a revulsion from the old representations of eternal torment, so important in the convictions of energetic priests and flaming revivalists. There is still great confidence of theologians in theology. Innovations are resisted. Men are cautioned not to

lean to human reason, nor to set up their individual conscience against the ripe thought and moral sense of the Church of ages.

When even change is feared, what vigorous fear must be felt when a revolution impends? But men do not yet consider how wide apart are religion and the theory of religion. Theology, like the crustacean shell, may at first protect religion, but if it may not be cast off, year by year, for a new one, it soon oppresses and even destroys.

The dread of Darwinian views is sincere; yet a secret fear prevails that they may be true. But have men considered what a relief they will be from some of the most disgraceful tenets of theology? Are they content to guard and defend a terrific scheme which sullies the honor, the justice, and the love of God, against a movement that will cleanse the abomination and vindicate the ways of God to man? Even if the great truth of evolution led to unbelief, it could not be so bad as that impious and malignant representation of God and his government which underlies all mediævals and most of modern theology. We shall quote from the Presbyterian Confession of Faith the account given by the Church of the origin of man, and of his moral government, in the light of which the scientific account of the origin of man and the nature of sin is as health to sickness, as life to death. Instead of dreading the prevalence of the scientific doctrine, Christian men should rush toward it with open arms and exultation, as a release from the hideous nightmare of ages.

In chapter IV., sec. 2, is the statement of man's creation:

"Our first parents, being seduced by the subtilty and temptation of Satan, sinned in eating the forbidden fruit. This, their sin, God was pleased, according to his will and holy counsel, to permit, having purposed to order it to his own glory. By this sin they fell from their original righteousness and communion with God, and so became dead in sin, and wholly defiled in all the faculties and parts of soul and body."

Next in chapter VI., secs. 1, 2, is the account of the origin of sin:

"They (Adam and Eve) being the root of mankind, the guilt of their sin was imputed and the same death in sin and corrupted nature conveyed to all their posterity, descending from them by ordinary generation. From this original corruption, whereby we are utterly indisposed, disabled, and made opposite to all good and wholly inclined to all evil, do proceed all actual transgressions."—(Chap. vi.: 3, 4.)

Should a physician place a son of fifteen years in a plague hospital, expecting, nay, certain that he would incur the disease, and that he would propagate it to innumerable others—that he might show his skill in combating it, would not language fail in characterizing the deed? Or, if this illustration be deemed inapt by leaving out the power of choice, substitute the case of a father who should place his daughter of seventeen years in a court where he knew that she would be surrounded by the most cunning courtiers, expert in seductive flatteries, who should beguile, bewilder, and seduce the innocence of the child who had no experience of danger, or example, or friend, and who should fall, become the mother of immodest children in endless succession; would such a cruel experiment be creditable or excusable because he meant to set up afterward remedial influence?

But the most astounding part of this account of creation is, that God, when he had created innocence and inexperience, permitted it to be debauched, and went on to transmit to the whole human race, through all time, the degradation, sin, and suffering of these divinely destroyed experimentalists of Eden.

It appears then, that the earth was a vast machine for the manufacturing of corruption; that God himself planned that corruption; that instead of stanching the evil at its outbreak, he devoted the earth to the production of corruption. It appears, also, that the sin which they did not commit was imputed to all the myriads of human beings born ages after the sin was committed, and that the penalty upon Adam's sin was the total derangement of every human faculty; so that men could not be obedient, but, as a part of the Divine will and arrangement, were created not only unable to do good, but by the whole force of God's decree made *opposite to all good* and *wholly inclined to all evil*. This we are taught has been the business of God for ten thousand years—to produce infinite sin and suffering.

Even this is but the beginning of that theory of creation and God's design in it, which theologians dread to have swept away by the revelations of science. It appears that, before a step was taken in this mighty tragedy, there was a distinct purpose, in God, that this world should produce innumerable wretched souls, whose sin resulted from the conditions of their creation, for whom no remedy was attempted, who were made with the distinct and avowed purpose of furnishing material for another and after world, designed and built for the purpose of torment endless, increasing forever!

"By the decree of God, for the manifestation of his glory, some men and angels are predestinated unto everlasting life, and others foreordained to everlasting death. These angels and men, thus predestinated and foreordained, are *particularly and unchangeably designed*, and their number is so certain and definite that it cannot be either increased or diminished. Those of mankind that are predestined unto life, God, before the foundation of the world was laid, according to his eternal and immutable purpose, and the secret counsel and good pleasure of his will, hath chosen in Christ unto everlasting glory, out of his mere free grace and love, without any foresight of faith, or good works or perseverance in either of them, or any other thing in the creation, or conditions, or causes moving him thereto, and all to the praise of his glory. . . . The rest of mankind God was pleased, according to the unsearchable counsel of his own will, whereby he extendeth or withholdeth mercy as he pleaseth, for the glory of his sovereign power over his creatures to pass by, and to ordain them to dishonor and wrath, for their sin, to the praise of his glorious justice." (Chap. iii., secs. 3, 4, 5, 7.)

To one who employs a moral sense bred in the sweet spirit of Jesus Christ, this extraordinary representation of the divine nature, and of the plan of creation, seems like an unreal dream. Yet, it represents the work of good men, of heroic men, in an obscure age, when absolute monarchy furnished the ideal of God, and when the citizen had no rights which the king was bound to respect. From such a mediæval horror all Christian men should fly toward the rising revelation in science, of God's true work in creation, with thanksgiving and gladness.

This doctrine of the Fall of Man in Adam is not, as may be imagined, an extreme and antiquated notion. It is fundamental to the whole orthodox theology of the world. The system could not stand a moment if it be exploded. It may be summarily said to be the working theory of the Christian Theology, as much to-day as it was five hundred years ago. Every man entering the ministry of the Presbyterian Church is obliged to swear to hold and to teach it. There is no difference in that respect between the Catholic and the Protestant creeds.

Within the memory of this generation these hideous doctrines were preached widely and vigorously. The outburst of indignation with which they were received was regarded as proof that man's unregenerate heart was at enmity with God. They may still be preached, but no longer with commanding sovereignty, but apologetically. They defend rather than assert themselves. But, in the main, this view lies silent in the pulpit like a corpse in a sepulcher. Here and there a good deacon remembers when such sound

doctrine was set triumphantly forth, to the confusion of heretics and infidels, and longs to hear again the refreshing sound. But the new generation, whether of clergy or laity, will not worship it. Yet it is to-day the only exposition, clear and thorough, of what the Church has to say as to the origin of man and the method of creation.

Not only is the method of creation thus disfigured, but over against it has been erected a scheme of reparation and redemption, if not so shocking, yet equally fictitious and delusive, and destined to give place to a nobler view of divine nature and of Providence, and of the divine thought of the redemption and elevation of mankind.

The tendency of recent scientific researches and disclosures respecting the mind of man, and his origin and nature, will be far more pronounced upon the theories of *theology* than upon the *institutions* of religion. Christian churches are legitimate organizations for the development of religious emotion and for the application of truth to our daily life. Those churches which are organized for *devotion* will be less disturbed than academical churches which have hitherto aimed only to expound and defend a creed. But, churches whose genius it is to develop religious thought, as distinguished from religious emotion, will gradually change, and the devotional element will take the place largely of the theologic, and the ethical the place of the philosophical.

When the creeds of the past era have passed away we shall enter upon the creeds of a new era. These will differ not alone in their contents from former doctrinal standards, but they will differ in the very genius and method of construction. Our reigning creeds begin with God, with moral government, with the scheme of the universe, with the great, invisible realm beyond. These are the weakest places in a creed, because the matters they contain are least within the reach of human reason, and because the alleged revelations from God upon them are the most scanty and uncertain. The creeds of the future will begin where the old ones ended: upon the nature of man, his condition on earth, his social duties and civil obligations, the development of his reason, his spiritual nature, its range, possibilities, education—the doctrine of the human reason, of the emotions, of the will—man as an individual, man social and collective; and from a sound knowledge of the nature of mind, developed within the scope of our experience and observation,

we shall deduce conceptions of the great mind—the God idealized from our best ascertainties—in the sphere within which our faculties were created to act with certainty of knowledge. Our creeds will ascend from the known to the unknown, which is the true law and method of acquiring knowledge. Hitherto they have expended their chief force upon that which is but dimly known.

The great fear of the pulpit, that morality will destroy spirituality, that to preach earthly duties will destroy communion with God, ecstatic visions and the forms of transcendent devotional experience, will have no necessary realization. Morality is the indispensable ground of spiritual fervor. “Blessed are the pure in heart; *they* shall see God.” The root working in the soil is mother of the white flower shining in the air. An elevated morality blossoms into spirituality. An eminent spirituality sends down the elaborated sap to every leaf, fiber and root that helped to create it. Already the work is done.

Between the heaven and the earth there stands God in human form, a man of such purity, wisdom, beneficence, that men believe that he came from above to translate heavenly life and love into earthly conditions. Superior to his own age, he has found no rival. If one was needed to teach men how to think of God, how to understand his goodness, his meanings, the genius of God’s life and disposition, was not Jesus the very one? What power without ostentation! What insight into the soul’s most subtle secrets! His very obscurity was as of one whose head was above the clouds. How much He thought of men, and how little of all the things after which the whole world rushed! What rigor of ideal purity! What pity for those who fell short of it! Crowns and kingdoms, and dynastic eminence could not represent (?) such a one. While ages have quarrelled, debating the evidences of divinity from the mechanical arrangements of dynastic power, the true tests of godliness have been neglected. To prove His divinity, men have trod down every vestige of evidence. They have despised men, hated and slain, convulsed kingdoms, soaked the earth with blood, and filled the sanctuary with infernal passions, in fierce argument to prove that Christ might be deemed divine! The signs and proof of divinity must be looked for in the soul. Love is royal. God is Love. Greater love hath no man than that he lay down his life for his friends. Jesus did it for love, and is forever King in the Realm of Love.

Is such a name to die? Will the world, when science shall have revealed all its secrets, find anything else so precious, so needful for hope, for comfort, as this great soul that stood between men and God, to teach them the way to God?

The future is not in danger from the revelations of science. Science is truth; Truth loves the truth. Changes must come and old things must pass away, but no tree sheds its leaf until it has rolled up a bud at its axil for the next summer.

Navigation does not cease when correct charts supersede faulty ones; nor husbandry, when invention supplies new implements superseding old ones; nor manufacturing, when chemistry improves texture and color; nor governments, when Reform sweeps away bad ones and exalts the better. Religion is not destroyed because a new philosophy of religion takes precedence of the old. Positive faith may stagger while old things are passing away. To give a rambling vine a new support, men prune back its long and leafless stems; but the root is vital. New growths spring with vigor. Our time is one of transition. We are refusing the theology of Absolute Monarchy—of Divine Despotism, and framing a theology consistent with the life and teachings of Jesus Christ.

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